

I. Stakeholder Survey Findings 2021

GHS attempted to survey its network and community via Survey Monkey in 2020 from 2/4-2/24/2020; there was only one response. Assuming this dismal response was due to the global pandemic, GHS continued to seek ways to obtain feedback from our stakeholders. In September of 2021, GHS held a series of four 90-minute public forums in different places across our county. Examples of locations included: senior centers, church, schools, women's shelter, consumer clubhouse and centers. There were close to two dozen listening sessions with stakeholders, including those living with mental health conditions/substance abuse disorders, the deaf, deaf/blind, and hard of hearing community, medical providers, school leaders, law enforcement officials, and those involved in the criminal justice system. All sessions were well attended and utilized a mixture of stakeholder survey questions along with other questions. An online survey was distributed to those that could not attend the forum in person, which gleaned 124 written responses. This is an analysis of the 2021 findings.

II. Survey Process and Participants

The following three types of events were used to survey participants September 2021.

- Community Forums: four 90-minute forums were set up in different locations across the county (Clio, Grand Blanc, Flint, and virtually). A flyer (created in English and Spanish) was sent to a wide range of community partners and was promoted by GHS via a press release, social media, newspaper advertisements, and a public service announcement on a local television station.
- Listening Sessions: nearly two dozen listening sessions with stakeholders with a diverse set of perspectives including those living with mental health concerns/conditions and/or substance use disorders, the deaf, deafblind, and hard of hearing community, medical providers, school leaders, law enforcement officials, and individuals involved in the criminal justice system.
- Survey: an online survey was also available to residents that could not attend the forums.

III. Survey Content and Responses

GHS identified the following seven focus areas to guide this research:

1. Law Enforcement /First Responders Crisis Intervention training (CIT) Mental Health Response Team
2. Law Enforcement/Mental Health Co-response and Jail Diversion
3. Court/ Corrections Mental Health Supports and Services
4. Suicide and Crisis Prevention
5. Schools: Prevention and Crisis De-escalation
6. Crisis Center/ Crisis Stabilization
7. Health and Wellness for Vulnerable Populations

Following the survey the following three themes were identified; GHS' original seven focus areas successfully identified the core mental health issues needing attention:

- There is a need for crisis-related services and training to educate the public, providers, and first responders about how to identify and direct individuals to these resources to avoid incarceration and unnecessary hospitalization.
- Support for mental health programs and services for all school-age children is strong, but there is also elevated concern for disconnected and at-risk youth who have been expelled, dropped out, or did not return to school following the period of COVID-19 related virtual learning.
- Community members are concerned about the need to address trauma, especially children, the elderly and vulnerable populations, such as individuals living in poverty and those experiencing homelessness and incarceration.
- There is a perceived gap in services for individuals with what could be considered as mild to moderate mental health issues, including children and adults who are dealing with increased levels of anxiety, grief, and depression.
- There appears to be a need to increase access and capacity to address the mental health needs of children and adults by reducing waitlists and improving care coordination.
- Genesee County residents want to see efforts to reduce the stigma related to mental health and increase awareness in a culturally competent manner.
- Across all the priority areas, there was interest in seeing more family-based and multigenerational approaches to address the direct mental health needs of an individual while also providing support and resources to their caregivers and support systems.

IV. Summary and Analysis

Based on analysis of the responses, there are three priority areas for 2021. Below is a brief summary of these recommendations.

1. Crisis Services (CIT for First Responders and Mental Health Co-response, Crisis Center, and Stabilization).

Data suggests that there is a critical need to address challenges associated with mental health crises. This includes training law enforcement and other first responders to better serve individuals in crisis, as well as providing a cadre of safe and accessible treatment services for individuals who need significant support while in crisis.

2. Prevention and Early Intervention (services for the most vulnerable populations, Services and Support's for school-age children, Services for depression, stress, and anxiety treatment and suicide prevention).

This section includes several focus areas for preventing individuals from reaching more acute mental health states and other crises through prevention by early intervention. This includes providing additional services to vulnerable populations, school-age children, and the broader population in need of general depression, anxiety, and other mental health supports up to and including suicide prevention.

This approach would result in targeting some resources to support those who are mental health consumers, as well as providing access to broader services for those with less intensive needs, such as increased levels of anxiety and depression.

3. Criminal Justice Diversion and Mental Health Services

This third area involves mental health supports and services to individuals in courts and corrections settings, as well as jail diversion programming. While no less important, based on review of the quantitative and qualitative data collected during this needs assessment process, these appear to be longer-term priorities, with the initial emphasis being on crisis and upstream interventions and supports.